

Buttdial

by Ron Capps

SYNOPSIS

God gets a new telephone and isn't yet very competent with it. God buttdials Annie and she picks up.

CHARACTERS

Annie. 30-ish, single.

God. 20-something, un-Godlike.

(Another Voice) (Off)

SETTING

Late night, Annie's apartment.

RUN TIME

Approx. ten minutes.

Ron Capps
ron_capps@gmail.com
+1 202 297 6965
47 Shore Road
Edgecomb ME 04556
USA

ANNIE sits in a chair or on a couch in a small apartment late at night. She has a cup of tea and is scrolling on her phone. Enter GOD, for now invisible to ANNIE.

(sound cue: ANNIE's phone rings.)

ANNIE

Hello?

GOD

Godammit. I did it again.

*(pulls phone out of his jeans pocket;
looks at the screen of the phone and sighs...)*

ANNIE

Hello?

GOD

Uh, Hi. I'm sorry. I think I have the wrong number. Sorry.

ANNIE

What number were you dialing?

GOD

Um, I don't know. I butt-dialed you.

ANNIE

You can't just butt-dial a ten-digit phone number unless it's programmed into your phone.

GOD

Um, right. I have a lot of numbers programmed into my phone. All of them, actually.

ANNIE

So how did you randomly scroll to my phone number out of all of the numbers you have on your phone and butt-dial me?

GOD

That's a good question, Annie. I'm not very good with this phone. It's new.

ANNIE

How do you know my name? Who is this?

(looks at the screen of her phone)

God! That's rich. You named yourself God in your directory. Who is this?

GOD

Um, well. I'm God.

(immediately become visible to ANNIE)

ANNIE

(jumps out of her chair)

Who are you! How did you get in here? Get out!

(they aren't on their phones any longer.)

GOD

Wait. I can explain.

(takes a small step toward ANNIE)

ANNIE

Don't move. I know kung fu.

(adopts mantis pose)

GOD

There is no such thing as kung fu. That was made up for a TV show and a novelty dance song in the 1970s.

(sings and maybe dances a little)

Everybody was kung fu fighting... dee de dee de deet dee deet de dee....

ANNIE

(relaxes the pose)

OK. But I do know how to protect myself and I'll kick you in the balls if you come any closer.

GOD

Look, Annie. This is all just a mistake. I butt-dialed you. I'm sorry.

ANNIE

OK, one more time: Who are you? And how did you get in here? I'm gonna kill that doorman.

GOD

I'm God. I've always been here, I mean, I'm everywhere, I just made myself visible to you in a form you would recognize. And please don't kill anyone. I've already laid out the rules on that sort of thing.

ANNIE

Excuse me, Mr. God, just how many types of medication are you off of right now?

GOD

Oh, for Christ's sake. I don't even know why we're having this conversation.

ANNIE

You don't know why we're having this conversation? Some god you are.

GOD

Ah, good one. Point for you. I take it you don't believe in pre-destination.

ANNIE

(*warily*) No. I feel like I'm more of a free will kind of girl.

GOD

Smart. You're on the right track, then.

ANNIE

Thanks. Hey, wait: If you're God, then do something God-like.

GOD

Like what?

ANNIE

I don't know, cure cancer.

GOD

It's not that simple.

ANNIE

Phony. I'm calling the cops.

GOD

No, you're not.

ANNIE

Try to stop me, whack job. And don't forget, I will kick you...

GOD

I know, in the balls.

ANNIE

(looks at her phone to see
it's gone completely dead.)

What the...? What did you do to my phone?

GOD

It's dead. I'm God. I'm good at death.

ANNIE

Yeah, well you better start getting good at resurrection too, mister. I'm expecting an important call.

GOD

No, you're not. But nonetheless, I'll resurrect your phone.

ANNIE

Don't screw it up. Like, don't lose any of my pictures or my calendar.

GOD

What about your search history?

ANNIE

Hey! What do you know about that?

GOD

(gives her a look)

ANNIE

Oh, right.

*(looks at phone, sees it's alive
and begins swiping across)*

OK, so you did something to make my phone not work and then work, without touching it. Big deal. Impress me. Do something big and god-like.

GOD

Look, it's not that simple. If I change one thing here, then something else goes hinky over there, which in turn...

ANNIE

Ah, so the clock thing or the butterfly effect, right?

GOD

Something like that, yes.

ANNIE

I tell you what, I'll ask you some questions and you answer them, OK?

GOD

Fine. Three questions.

ANNIE

Why three?

GOD

Well, except for relationships and cop-buddy movies, everything works better in threes. Faith, hope, and charity.... Past, present, and future ... Moe, Larry, and Curly. So, three questions. Ask me anything.

ANNIE

What happens when we die?

GOD

Well, usually one or more of your organs cease to function properly which causes a complete failure of the system. Occasionally, something traumatic causes this to happen unexpectedly, and if this is caused by user error it voids the warranty.

ANNIE

Ha Ha. You know what I mean. Answer my question.

GOD

Oh, you mean what happens after you die. Well, for the most part it's game over. You're here and then you're not.

ANNIE

What?! No afterlife? No heaven, no hell, no harps, no angels?

GOD

Are those your second and third questions?

ANNIE

NO! Those are just clarifying questions. You know like CNN gets in press conferences at the White House.

GOD

I always find that so annoying. But I'll allow one. So, no. There is no heaven, hell, or purgatory; no eternal damnation, no fire and brimstone or any of that hooey. They are constructs of weak, fearful, and manipulative men. Just as fake and useless as astrology, pro wrestling, and Donald Trump's hair. It's like this: Heaven and hell, they are right here on earth, and you get to decide which one you reside in. To put it simply, heaven is living in your hopes and hell is living in your fears.

ANNIE

We create our own heaven and hell. Well, I'll be damned.

GOD

Well, no. Actually, you won't.

ANNIE

Wait, you didn't mention angels.

GOD

Right. Angels and devils do exist. They walk among you.

ANNIE

I knew it! So, come clean. Keanu Reeves, angel right?

GOD

I thought you didn't want to talk about your search history.

ANNIE

Right. Moving on. Next question? So, riddle me this Batman...there's all this stuff in the Bible about the creation, right? But nowhere does it answer the most fundamental question of all. If you made the world, you know, the whole shebang, the universe, the multiverse, and whatever there is beyond that, who made you?

GOD

Yeah, I get this one a lot. I call it the "Who's your daddy?" question. So, the short answer is that no one created me. But most people don't believe me and think that's impossible. Because they think in terms of cause and effect.

ANNIE

Put me in that camp.

GOD

Noted. But a cause-and-effect world requires a linear timeline. You know, this happened which caused that to happen which in turn put those things into motion. And for most things, including people, that's how it works: You are born, you have some fun (looks around...) or not,

ANNIE

Hey!

GOD

...And then you fall off the perch. And that's the way I designed the system.

ANNIE

OK. Clarifying question. Why? Why would you design a system where things, people particularly, grow old and die off?

GOD

It seemed like a good idea at the time.

ANNIE

It seemed like a good idea at the time. Aren't you supposed to be infallible, and omniscient, and so on and so on, etcetera, etcetera, forever and ever, amen??

GOD

Well, I am. But I can choose not to be. And, boy, when I do, the engineers hate it. Oh my god, how they complain: There's too much flux, the tolerances aren't close enough, blah, blah, blah. I chose not to be omniscient and directive about things like love and desire and so on. Instead, I gave you free will.

ANNIE

Hunh. OK, go on.

GOD

Ah. Well, time works differently for me than you. It's not linear for me. I don't have a "best used by" date. I didn't come from anywhere, from anyone, or anything. I just sort of am. Think of this as the Popeye solution. You know, *(in Popeye's voice)* I am what I am and that's all that I am.

ANNIE

That is incredibly unsatisfying.

GOD

I feel your pain.

ANNIE

Ha! Clinton: Angel or devil?

GOD

Bill? All too mortal. Hillary's another story. But you don't want to run out of questions, do you?

ANNIE

No, no, no. This is my last one, right?

GOD

Right. No pressure.

ANNIE

All right. So..... recapping: When we die, it's game over; you designed the system that way but it doesn't apply to you because you're not like us. How am I doing so far?

GOD

That pretty much sums it up.

ANNIE

OK, here's number three: Why are you such a dick sometimes? I mean Hitler ...andokra.

GOD

What's wrong with Oprah? I'm actually pretty pleased with her.

ANNIE

No, OKRA, O K R A. The slimy vegetable. Oprah's fine. An angel, right?

GOD

Oh, Okra. First, I never expected anyone to eat okra. I mean seriously? Yuck! And Oprah is mortal, believe it or not. 100% mortal. But Hitler is a valid complaint. Hitler gets us back to the free will question. If you want me to plan out every little thing that happens in every single person's life and then plot out the path of humankind and to tie in all of the animals and the plants and so on for all eternity, I'm happy to do that. Just say the word. But, if you want free will, you gotta take the good with the bad. Hitler? He could have been stopped. But, hey, not my circus, not my monkeys.

ANNIE

Again, incredibly unsatisfying.

GOD

I get it. Look, I'm doing my best. This is my first earth.

ANNIE

Your first earth? You mean there are others? Other earths?

GOD

(Certain he doesn't want to have
this conversation,
GOD looks at his phone)

Oh my god. Look at the time. I really do have to be running. It's been just lovely chatting with you, I hope I've been able to clear a few things up for you and, again, sorry about the buttdial. New phone. But gotta go.

(vanishes)

ANOTHER VOICE (OFF)

"Hello?"

GOD (OFF)

Godammit. I did it again. Uh, Hi. I'm sorry. I think I have the wrong number. Sorry. I must have butt-dialed you.

BLACKOUT